

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

COMPLETE LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-45 : (Canceled)

Claim 46 : (New) A plate stand, comprising:

a) a column extending along a longitudinal axis between upper and lower end regions;

b) a base at the lower end region, for supporting the column in an upright orientation;

c) a plate having an upper surface, a lower surface, and at least one compartment;

d) a platform on the column above the base, for engaging the lower surface of the plate to support the plate from below the plate; and

e) a clamping element mounted at the upper end region for axial movement between a clamped position in which the clamping element engages the upper surface of the plate and axially presses the plate against the platform to clamp the plate on the platform, and an unclamped position in which the plate is removable from the platform, the upper end region of the column being upwardly open in the clamped position.

Claim 47 : (New) The plate stand of claim 46, wherein the plate has a plurality of compartments for storing foods.

Claim 48 : (New) The plate stand of claim 46, wherein the plate is constituted of a disposable material.

Claim 49 : (New) The plate stand of claim 46, wherein the plate has a central opening extending between the upper and lower surfaces of the plate, and wherein the upper end region of the column extends through the central opening for engagement with the clamping element.

Claim 50 : (New) The plate stand of claim 49, wherein the upper end region of the column is threaded, and wherein the clamping element threadedly engages the upper end region of the column.

Claim 51 : (New) The plate stand of claim 50, wherein the clamping element has an annular internal thread.

Claim 52 : (New) The plate stand of claim 51, wherein the clamping element has opposite planar surfaces.

Claim 53 : (New) The plate stand of claim 51, wherein the clamping element has an upwardly open, concave shape symmetrical about the longitudinal axis.

Claim 54 : (New) The plate stand of claim 46, wherein the column is a single hollow cylinder with a diameter sized to be readily gripped in the palm of a user's hand.

Claim 55 : (New) The plate stand of claim 46, wherein the column includes a plurality of tubular cylindrical sections arranged for sliding lengthwise movement relative to one another, and a lock for locking the sections together.

Claim 56 : (New) The plate stand of claim 46, and a frusto-conical beverage container inserted into the upper end region of the column with a friction fit.

Claim 57 : (New) The plate stand of claim 56, wherein the clamping element has an upwardly open, concave shape symmetrical about the longitudinal axis, for collecting beverage escaped from the container.